

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EUR-08 INR-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00
SP-02 NSC-05 NSCE-00 PRS-01 PM-03 EB-04 TRSE-00
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P R 181253Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9151
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY LONDON

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 ACCRA 5427

LIMDIS

LONDON FOR SEITZ

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PINS, PINT, PGOV, GH
SUBJECT: ACHEAMPONG'S VIEWS ON GHANA'S POLITICAL CRISIS

REF: ACCRA 5367

1. SUMMARY: ON JULY 15 ACHEAMPONG GAVE ME HIS VERSION
OF CURRENT CONFRONTATION WITH PROFESSIONAL GROUPS.
HE AGREED THAT SOME "ADJUSTMENT" IN THE TWO-YEAR
TIMETABLE FOR A HANDOVER TO CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT
WAS POSSIBLE BUT WILL RESIST ANY ATTEMPT TO FORCE HIM
OUT BY THE END OF 1977. HE WILL ALSO OPPOSE THE
RETURN OF POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE CONCEPT OF A
"PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION" TO OVERSEE THE TRANSITION.
HE BELIEVES THE COMMUNISTS ARE INSTIGATING UNREST

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IN GHANA (A VIEW WE DO NOT SHARE), AND SAYS THAT
RECENT REFERENCES IN GOG STATEMENTS AND THE PRESS
TO AN UNNAMED "FOREIGN POWER" INTERFERING IN
GHANAIAAN AFFAIRS WERE DIRECTED AT THE SOVIETS--NOT
THE USG. END SUMMARY

2. HEAD OF STATE AND CHAIRMAN OF THE SUPREME

MILITARY COUNCIL (SMC) ACHEAMPONG SUMMOND ME FOR A TALK LATE MORNING OF JULY 15, MAIN PURPOSE OF WHICH REPORTED SEPTEL (NOTAL). HE RECEIVED ME ALONE AND GREETED ME WARMLY. MAKING NO ATTEMPT TO HIDE HIS CONCERN OVER THE DEEPENING POLITICAL CRISIS HE FACES, THE CHAIRMAN OUTLINED HIS OWN VERSION OF THE CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE SMC AND THE STRIKING PROFESSIONAL GROUPS.

3. ACHEAMPONG COMPLAINED BITTERLY THAT THE STUDENTS AND STRIKING PROFESSIONALS--ESPECIALLY THE DOCTORS--DO NOT RPT NOT APPRECIATE HOW PATIENT AND MAGNANIMOUS HE HAS BEEN. HE HAS "TRIED HARD" TO NEGOTIATE AN AMICABLE SETTLEMENT WITH THEM. HE HAS SET A SPECIFIC TIMETABLE FOR HANDING OVER TO A FREELY ELECTED CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT IN TWO YEARS TIME (REFTEL) AND HAS EVEN OFFERED TO HAVE THE REFERENDUM AND/OR ELECTIONS HELD UNDER "INTERNATIONAL SUPERVISION." IN WHAT HE CALLED A "DIFFICULT" NEGOTIATING SESSION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL GROUP REPS ON JULY 14, HOWEVER, HE FOUND THEM "STUBBORN" AND INSISTENT ON THE SMC'S STEPPING DOWN BY THE END OF 1977.

4. ACHEAMPONG SAID THIS WAS TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE TO HIM, FOR HE WAS DETERMINED TO AVOID CHAOS AND CONFUSION AT ALL COSTS, A SITUATION WHICH WOULD
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CERTAINLY RESULT IF THE MILITARY SIMPLY WITHDREW WITHOUT INSURING ANY CONTINUITY OF POLICIES AND PROGRAMS. HE MADE CLEAR THAT THE PROFESSIONALS' SUGGESTION OF AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT HEADED BY A "PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION" (REFTEL) WAS UNACCEPTABLE FOR THAT REASON. MOREOVER, BECAUSE OF THE DEATHS OR CHANGES IN RESIDENCE OCCURING SINCE THE LAST VOTERS LISTS WERE DRAWN UP, A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF TIME WOULD BE REQUIRED TO PREPARE NEW LISTS. THIS PROBLEM SEEMS TO BE IGNORED BY THE PROFESSIONALS AS WELL.

5. ACHEAMPONG WAS ADAMANTLY OPPOSED AS WELL TO THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF POLITICAL PARTIES, INSISTING THAT MOST GHANAIS AGREED WITH HIM. GHANA MUST FIND A NEW SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT WHICH COULD AVOID THE EVILS OF POLITICAL PARTIES. THIS WAS WHY THE CONCEPT OF UNION GOVERNMENT WAS PROPOSED. HE DENIED INDIGNANTLY THE OPPOSITION'S CHARGES THAT THE SMC WAS TRYING TO PERPETUATE ITSELF IN POWER AND REITERATED HIS EARLIER STATEMENT THAT THE MILITARY AND POLICE WOULD BE REPRESENTED IN ANY NEW GOVERN-

MENT ONLY IF THE PEOPLE WANTED IT.

6. ACHEAMPONG SAID THE PROFESSIONALS WERE TRYING HIS PATIENCE. THEY SEEMED TO FORGET THAT HE, NOT TYEY, WAS DEALING FROM A POSITION OF STRENGTH. IN ADDITION TO THE POLICE AND MILITARY (SOME OF WHOM, HE COMPLAINED, WERE NOW ACCUSING HIM OF BEING "TOO SOFT" ON THE STRIKING PROFESSIONALS), HE CLAIMED THAT HE HAD THE SUPPORT OF THE TRADE UNIONS CONGRESS, THE CHIEFS THE FARMERS AND "MANY OTHER GROUPS." HE DID NOT WANT TO USE FORCE TO BREAK THE PROFESSIONALS BUT SOME OF HIS MILITARY COLLEAGUES WERE NOW URGING HIM TO DO SO. HE WOULD CONTINUE TO RESIST THESE PRESSURES BUT HOPED THE PROFESSIONALS WOULD HEED HIS WARNING
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TO GO BACK TO WORK BEFORE ANY FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS.

7. I ASKED WHETHER SOME MIDDLE GROUND MIGHT NOT BE FOUND BETWEEN THE PROFESSIONALS' DEMAND TO HAND OVER BY THE END OF 1977 AND THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSED DATE OF JULY, 1979. MIGHT NOT SOME SHORTENING OF THE TIMETABLE BE NEGOTIATED AS A COMPROMISE? ACHEAMPONG SAID THIS IN FACT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE--BUT ONLY IF THE PROFESSIONALS RETURNED TO WORK AND IF THE IDEAS OF POLITICAL PARTIES AND A "PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION" WERE DROPPED. ANY "ADJUSTMENT" IN THE TIMETABLE WOULD HAVE TO ALLOW SUFFICIENT TIME TO

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INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 ACCRA 5427

LIMDIS

LONDON FOR SEITZ

ARRANGE THE TRANSITION AND HANDOVER IN AN ORDERLY
AND PEACEFUL FASHION.

8. ACHEAMPONG COMPLAINED AT LENGTH ABOUT "COMMUNIST"
INSTIGATION OF THE CURRENT UNREST IN GHANA, BOTH
AMONG THE PROFESSIONALS AND ESPECIALLY AMONG THE
STUDENTS. HE WAS DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT COMMUNIST
ENCROACHMENT AND FEARED THAT A PREMATURE HANDOVER
BY THE SMC MIGHT WELL LEAD TO A COMMUNIST GRAB
FOR POWER. I REFERRED TO RECENT GOVERNMENT AND
PRESS STATEMENTS ALLEGING INVOLVEMENT AND INTER-
FERENCE BY A "FOREIGN POWER" IN THE GHANAIA
SITUATION. ACHEAMPONG SAID THE REFERENCES WERE TO
SOVIET INVOLVEMENT--NOT AMERICAN. HE VALUED THE
CORDIAL RELATIONS HE HAD WITH THE US AND KNEW WE
WERE "NOT STIRRING UP PROBLEMS." ON THE OTHER HAND,
HE HAD EVIDENCE THAT THE COMMUNISTS WERE DOING SO.

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I SAID I HAD BEEN CONCERNED AT THE POSSIBILITY
THAT SOME FALSE AND PERHAPS DELIBERATELY PLANTED
INFORMATION ALLEGING AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT MIGHT HAVE
REACHED HIM. ACHEAMPONG CHEERFULLY AGREED THAT THIS
WAS THE CASE, BUT THAT HIS SECURITY PEOPLE "KNEW
BETTER" AND ALSO KNEW WHO WAS TRYING TO "DRIVE THE
WEDGE BETWEEN US."

9. COMMENT: DESPITE HIS OBVIOUS CONCERN, ACHEAMPONG
APPEARED LESS NERVOUS AND TENSE THAT I HAD
ANTICIPATED. HE WAS FIRM IN CITING THISE DEMANDS
OF THE STRIKERS WHICH HE WOULD NOT ACCEPT, BUT
HE READILY ADMITTED THAT A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT
MIGHT BE POSSIBLE ONCE THE STRIKERS RETURNED TO
WORK. AS WE HAVE REPORTED ELSEWHERE, WE DO NOT
RPT NOT SHARE ACHEAMPONG'S VIEW THAT THE COMMUNISTS
ARE INSTIGATING THE UNREST IN GHANA. ON THE
CONTRARY, HIS PRINCIPAL OPPONENTS ARE GHANAIA
LAWYERS, DOCTORS AND OTHER PROFESSIONALS, MANY
OF WHOM ARE U.S. EDUCATED AND MOST OF WHOM ARE
STRONGLY PRO-WESTERN IN ORIENTATION. THEY WANT

THE SMC AND ACHEAMPONG TO HAND OVER--AND THE
SOONER THE BETTER--BUT WITHOUT MORE SUPPORT FROM
THE MILITARY AND TRADE UNIONS, IT APPEARS DOUBTFUL
THAT THEY HAVE THE MUSCLE TO FORCE THEIR OWN
TIMETABLE ON THE GOVERNMENT.
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